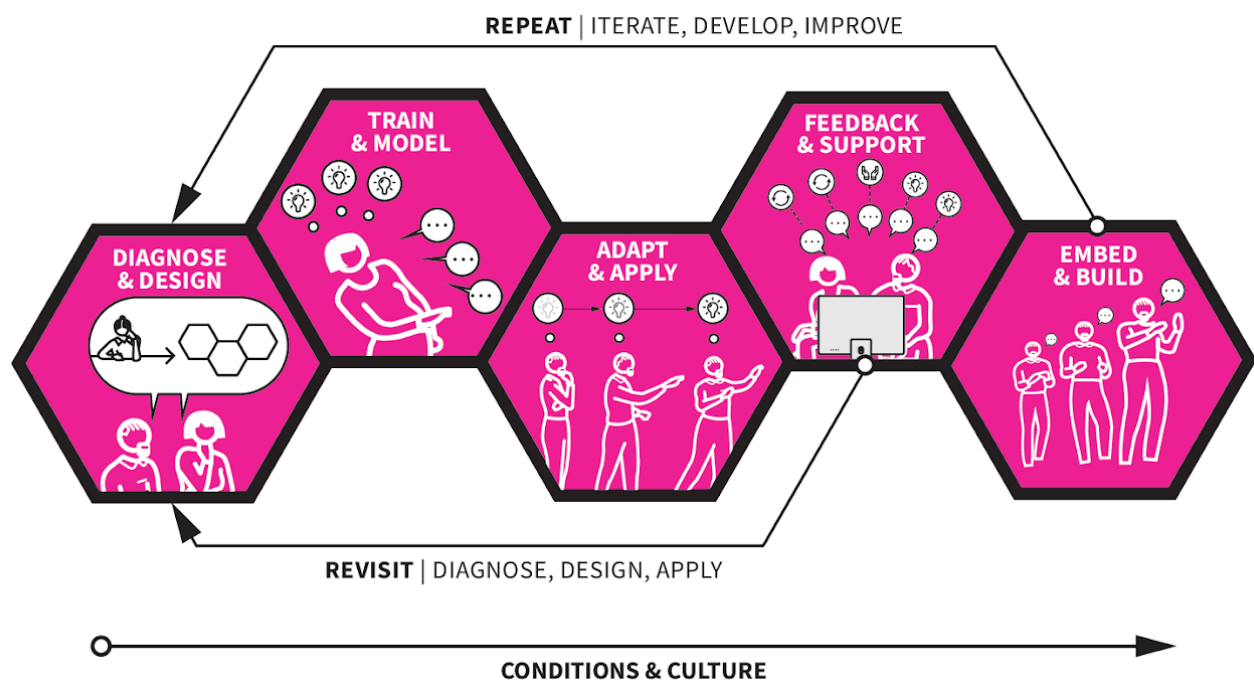




Responsive WalkThrus Coaching System (Interactive Playbook)



CONDITIONS AND CULTURE

“The job you’re doing is so hard that one lifetime isn’t enough to master it. So every single one of you needs to accept the commitment to carry on improving our practice until we retire or die. That’s the deal.”

Dylan Wiliam (2012) *Every Teacher Can Improve*

Leverage Leadership

Exceptional school leaders succeed because of how they use their time: what they do, and when they do it. The precision with which a leader uses their time for what matters most is what marks a paradigm shift. So, what really makes schools effective? The answer is high leverage leadership that ensures great teaching to guarantee great learning for every child. Focus on what matters and go!

There is a core set of seven levers to achieve consistent, transformational and replicable growth:

Instructional Levers:

1. **Data-Driven Instruction** - Continuously prioritise the learning: start from a high-quality end goal and adjust your teaching to meet pupils’ needs
2. **Instructional Planning** - Plan backwards to guarantee strong lessons
3. **Observation and Feedback** - Coach teachers to improve the learning
4. **Professional Development** - Strengthen teams with hands-on training that sticks

Cultural Levers:

5. **Pupil Culture** - Set the expectations, routines, and values that create an environment where learning can thrive
6. **Staff Culture** - Build shared values and behaviours that unite and guide adults to a common purpose
7. **Managing School Leadership Teams** - Increase instructional leadership capacity to achieve consistent coaching for every teacher every week

2030 Strategy: Coaching

Underpinning our 2030 Strategy ambitions is the fundamental belief that coaching serves as a crucial enabler of flourishing and relational trust, showing unreasonable hospitality. If we want our teachers to obsess about how they make our children feel, we must obsess about how we make our employees feel. Coaching is an act of service; great service cannot exist without great, supportive leadership.

Coaching in The Stour Federation exists purely to improve teaching, completely decoupled from appraisal, capability, or compliance. It is an everyday entitlement and responsibility built into the fabric of school life to provide a focused space to think, rehearse, and refine. It operates on personal, cognitive, and technical levels to move teachers towards intentionality.

Meaningful coaching only matters if it changes what happens when no one is watching. Teachers spend 98% of their time alone in the classroom, making real-time decisions. If coaching doesn’t result in teacher change that sticks, it’s wasted. Meaningful coaching works on three levels:

- **Personal** - it solves problems teachers care about.
- **Cognitive** - it helps them think clearly about their practice.
- It **sharpens** their use of core teaching techniques.

Coaching should help teachers move towards intentionality, enabling them to deliberately create the right conditions for learning.

- **Purpose** - every action should serve a clear goal.
- **Precision** - run the cycle with accuracy: sharp, deliberate and consistent.
- **Awareness** - develop teachers' professional vision in real time.
- **Commitment** - follow through and make it happen.
- **Fluency** - adapting and combining techniques in the moment.

TEACHING WALKTHRUS IS OUR PLAYBOOK SO COACHES AND TEACHERS NEED TO USE THE TECHNIQUES IN THEIR OWN CLASSROOM. COACHES NEED TO KNOW THEM INSIDE OUT.

Our coaching cycle exists in all seven levers, particularly observation and feedback, planning, data-driven instruction, and leading professional learning. Coaching creates consistency that is so important for effective implementation. It needs to be habitual and routine.

One-to-One (Coach-Teacher): Identify and train a team of specialist coaches who coach a number of teachers each. Coaching expertise across the team can be strong in this model, but time must be allocated to coaches to operate in this role.

Coached Pairs (Coach-Teacher-Teacher): Coaching two people at a time works extremely well when both teachers are in the same primary year group.

Coaching in Teams: The team leader develops their role to act as a team coach alongside their other duties. They would typically conduct routine learning walks, visiting all or most teachers between planned team sessions. In each session the *Team Conversations* process is used to ensure each teacher is engaged in the dialogue and constructs action steps in response to the reflection and feedback.

Coaching as a Whole Staff Team: In some settings, the whole staff can act like one very large team where common problems are explored and feedback from observations is generated and discussed collectively. If the meetings are just a few weeks apart, leaders have time to undertake observations through learning walks and can create iterative feedback loops. The sessions must give time for each teacher to translate the discussion and general feedback into specific actions, ideally with everyone making a record for reference in the next cycle.

Trust

Building this culture requires a shared burden of responsibility. We operate under the [TRUST](#) framework:

- **Transparency:** Openness about goals. Teacher commitment: Honesty about classroom struggles.
- **Reliability:** Coach commitment: Showing up on time, every time, without fail.
- **Unified Understanding:** A shared mental model of excellence.
- **Support:** Providing resources. Coach commitment: Total non-judgment and emotional safety.
- **Time:** Teacher commitment: Protecting the rehearsal time from the "whirlwind."

Observe More Frequently

Imagine you have a new passion - anything from golf to playing piano to dancing - and you are training every day to compete in a national competition. You are looking for the best coach to help you get better. Imagine that one of the coaches you find tells you, "I'll come watch you once or twice this year, and then I'll send you written feedback." Unless you have no alternative, you would say no immediately. If we would reject such periodic coaching for our passions, why do we accept intermittent coaching as the norm when it comes to teaching? Coaching is no less essential in teaching than in any other profession and teachers need input from sources other than themselves.

Seeing a teacher once or twice a year isn't coaching - it's evaluation. Effective coaching requires ongoing observation, not drive-by evaluations. Just as no football coach would watch only a few minutes of two games a season and expect improvement, effective instructional coaching requires a steady, sustained gaze, not a sporadic one. It's all about frequency and consistency.

By receiving biweekly observations and feedback, a teacher gets as much development in one year as most receive in twenty.

DIAGNOSE AND DESIGN

Strategic improvement requires moving beyond "general impressions" toward a forensic identification of learning problems. We do not look for faults; we look for barriers to pupil flourishing.

Coaches must align classroom observations with

Lesson Visits and Learning Walks



Establish a well-defined set of processes that allow teachers to gain some meaningful feedback about their practice in such a way that it supports their development. This might include a combination of:

- Planned coach observations, focused on action steps agreed in the coaching session.
- Learning walks by team leaders, feeding into each subsequent team coaching meeting.

Formal lesson observations, typically conducted by leaders 2-3 times per year, place disproportionate emphasis on delivering set-piece lessons that meet the school's criteria for a positive judgement. These lessons become performative rather than revealing typical issues the teacher experiences.

Learning walks are much better. Here, leaders drop into multiple lessons for 10-15 minutes each, engaging with the lesson and the learning. They are low stakes, quick and can be repeated many times across the year capturing typicality,

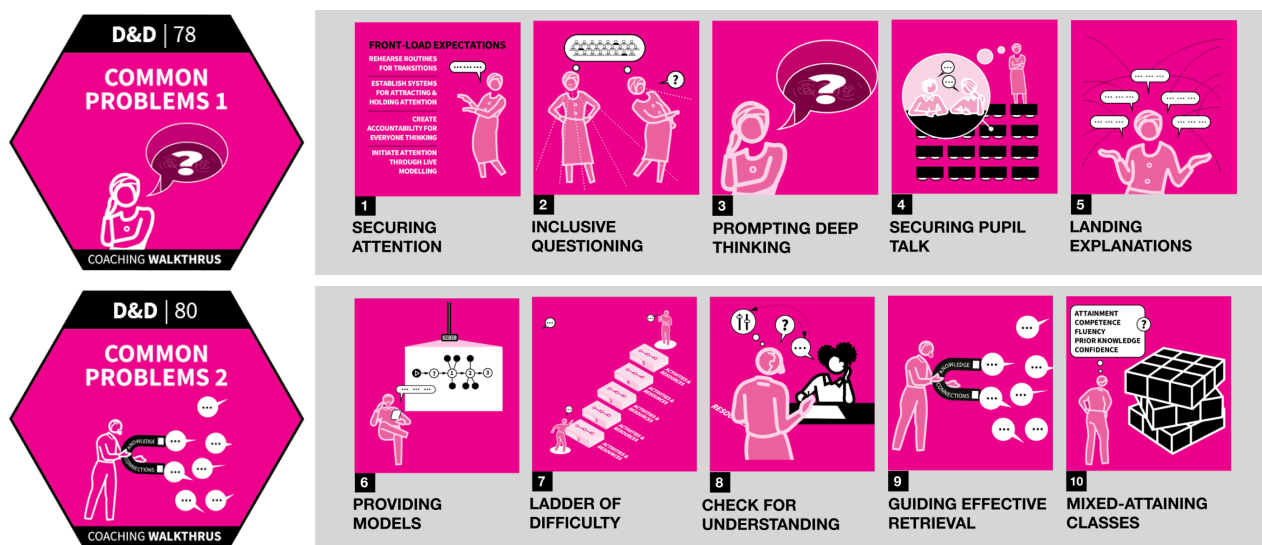
A further benefit of a strong coaching culture is that we focus on shifting habits over time. We are not interested in speed camera behaviours where teachers might follow agreed protocols or perform a WalkThru routine when being observed, but not the rest of the time. Where schools use routine learning walks, capturing typicality, and then undertake structured feedback conversations using the 5Ps Framework, short-term compliance ceases to be an issue. We aim for sustained change, and teachers' motivation towards achieving their goal is much greater.

Teaching Sprints

Teaching Sprints exemplify team-driven professional learning. Sprints support teachers to learn about, practise and review a small slice of their teaching over a short period of time (2-4 weeks). The intensity of this collaborative process is a powerful catalyst, injecting energy and generating focused commitment from teachers to move their practice forward. The Teaching Sprints structure draws on many elements of team coaching and is an excellent vehicle for taking WalkThrus from the page to the classroom.

After 2 to 4 weeks in the Sprint Phase, your team comes together again to close out the Teaching Sprint. During the Review Phase, you reflect on learning as practitioners. The team discusses changes to practice, considers the impact evidence and decides how new learning might be transferred into future practice. Observation may play a role here but Sprints can also be largely a supported self-review process. It works well to use The 5Ps Framework process to structure the review.

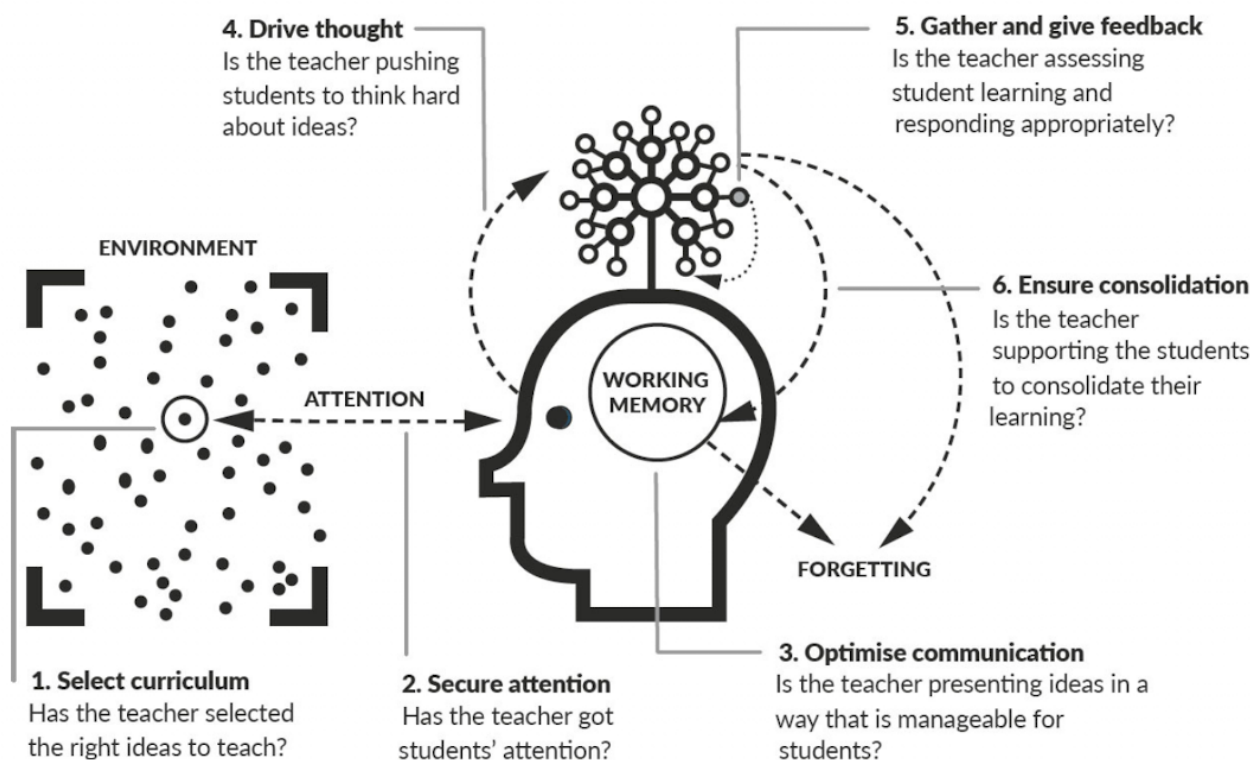
Common Problems



As a coach, you'll encounter these issues in nearly every lesson you observe. The key is recognising them and knowing how to respond in a way that best supports the teachers you are working with.

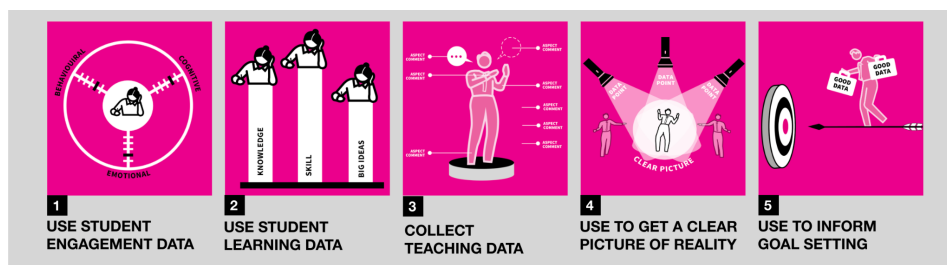
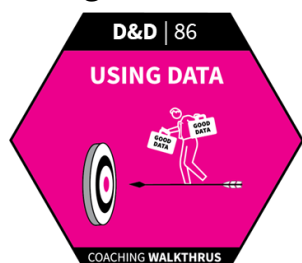
Coaches must align classroom observations with Josh Goodrich's diagnostic chain of the six persistent problems of teaching. Problems must be diagnosed and tackled in a strict sequential order:

Curriculum → Attention → Communication → Thought → Feedback → Consolidation



If a coach identifies multiple learning problems, they must focus on the problem closest to the beginning of the diagnostic chain. If a teacher struggles with both "Thought" and "Attention", the coach must select WalkThrus for "Attention" (e.g., Signal, Pause, Insist) first, as attention is the gatekeeper of learning.

Using Data



Data-driven instruction is the single most effective use of a school leader's time. Data should support improvement, not evaluate performance. In coaching, data means concrete, observable information about what children are doing, saying, writing and learning. It'll often be qualitative or impressionistic - what matters is that it helps the teacher reflect and make better decisions. No single source tells the whole story, so use a range: observation, pupil's work, curriculum materials and teacher reflections. Agree in advance what to focus on, then stick to it. A quick scan of whiteboards, a tally of disengaged pupils or a few underdeveloped answers in a discussion all count. Effective instruction is not about whether we taught it; it's about whether the children learned it.

Goal Setting



When teachers define clear goals linked to their practice, they are more likely to act and improve. The If... Then... So That... framework works because it underpins the problem-solution dynamic of great coaching: naming the problem, specifying the technique that might help and building clarity around what the intended change will look like.

✓ “**IF** I want all children thinking hard about a question...**THEN** I’ll use Cold Calling...**SO THAT** when I ask a question, everybody thinks and formulates a response.”

✓ “**IF** I want all children practising their explanations...**THEN** I’ll use Think, Pair, Share...**SO THAT** every child has a chance to rehearse and get feedback.”

Coaches must verify they meet the 3M criteria:

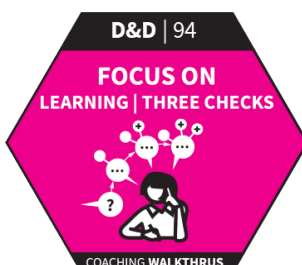
- **Meaty:** Goals describe significant areas of classroom practice that make a major difference to pupil learning.
- **Manageable:** Completable within the medium term.
- **Measurable:** Progress can be tracked incrementally against clear, pre-set criteria.

Coaches must avoid "scattered coaching" (switching goals too often lesson-by-lesson). Select a long-term, high-leverage classroom goal (aligned with our Wildly Important Goals (WIGs)), and then map out multiple smaller, highly motivating "levels" or milestones en route to completing it.

Once a WalkThru technique is diagnosed use the PER acronym for action sequencing:

- **Prepare:** What must the teacher plan, script, know, and prepare before entering the classroom?
- **Execute:** What physical actions must the teacher take to initiate the classroom effect?
- **Respond:** What information must the teacher gather to determine if they achieved the desired impact?

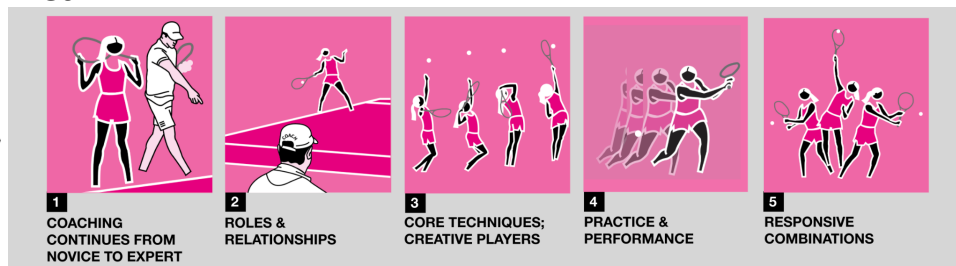
Three Checks



It is important for coaching processes to focus on ALL pupil learning as the ultimate goal for any teacher actions. Teachers need to plan for EVERYONE in their class to be learning and to check that this is happening. The emphasis on all is a central challenge for teaching, not least because we can’t always tell if learning is happening, especially in a short observation. Three simple questions can help to unpack the complexity.

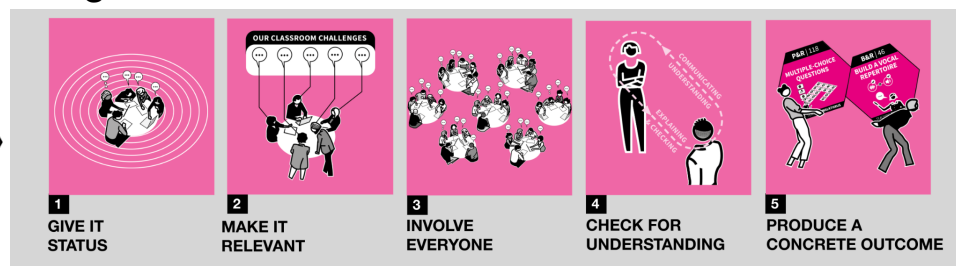
TRAIN AND MODEL

Tennis Player Analogy



The Tennis Player Analogy helps highlight key aspects of instructional coaching. Players strive for excellence in their performance; they use well-defined techniques and seek to improve through routine practice. Coaches use their knowledge of the game to help players understand how to improve as well as providing motivational guidance. The most effective teachers and leaders know when teaching is working. And when it isn't, they fix it.

Every Teacher Thinking



Training is such a crucial part of the coaching process, so it's important that everyone sees it as serious professional work. That means everyone thinking hard, participating fully and taking it seriously. To make that happen, we need to create the right conditions. High participation workshops don't happen by accident - they need to be planned properly and well led by coaches who are knowledgeable and confident. When teachers think deeply during training, they're far more likely to apply what they've learned where it matters - in the classroom.

Theory, See It, Name It, Do It

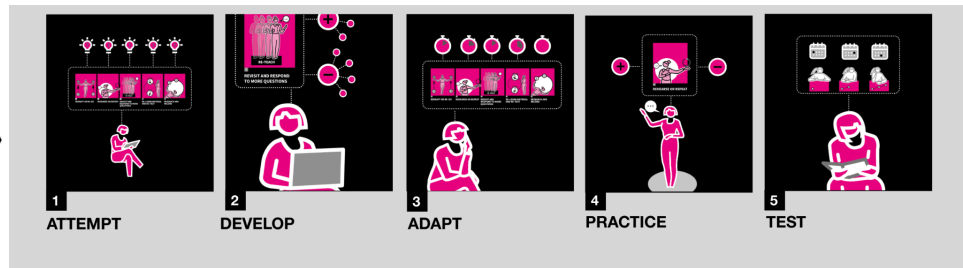


Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's See It, Name It, Do It framework is the perfect vehicle to deliver the active ingredients needed to develop teachers' schema and build strong mental models of teaching: knowledge, modelling, technique and rehearsal.

See It, Name It, and Do It are the three essential steps to implementing any one of the seven levers of school leadership: seeing a model of excellence in clear detail (and the gap between that model and our own practice); naming the qualifying characteristics that make that model effective (so that others can name it as well); and doing those actions repeatedly, first behind the scenes in practice sessions and then daily in the classroom.

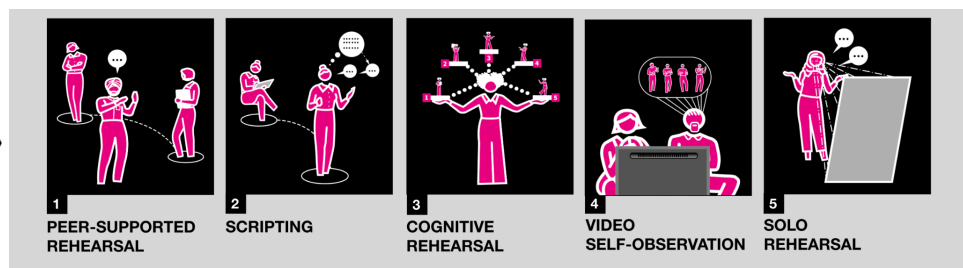
ADAPT AND APPLY

Rehearsal

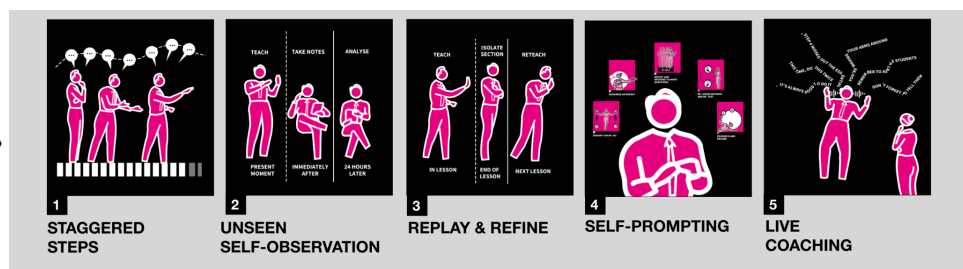


WalkThrus are an attempt to codify and simplify common teaching techniques — but they are not fixed rules to abide by. They can't be a rigid checklist. The A|D|A|P|T approach can support everyone in a coaching dialogue to move towards teachers forming better habits that make an impact on learning.

To help teachers avoid overwhelming cognitive load, action steps must be precise, granular, and action-focused. To verify granularity, coaches must ask: *"Could this action step be successfully accomplished in one week?"* If not, the step is too large and must be broken down further.

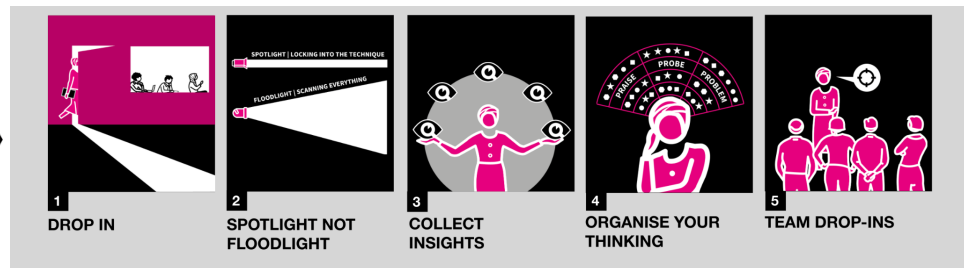


The EEF identifies rehearsal as a core mechanism of effective professional learning. Practising a technique at least once outside the classroom helps teachers refine their skills and embed habits before applying them in real lessons. Rehearsing away from classroom pressures - with the support of a peer or coach - allows teachers to practise, adapt and build confidence. Rehearsal is not pretend role play.



Rehearsal starts in the training room, but it must continue in the classroom. It's match practice - building confidence and fluency in real conditions.

Drop Ins



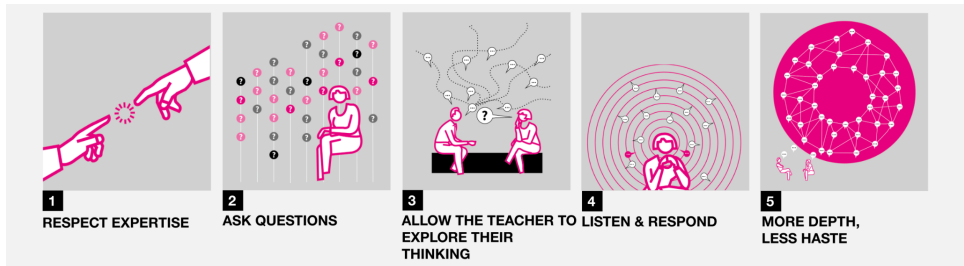
Drop-ins are short, formative check-ins that help teachers refine a technique as they work towards their goal. By this stage, the teacher has already identified what they are developing. Drop-ins serve two purposes:

- Gather focused insights on how the technique is being used and its effect on pupils.
- Identify patterns to shape individual or team-based coaching.

The focus is on refinement, not evaluation. The goal is to collect useful insights that help teachers sharpen their use of the focal technique. The WalkThrus in [Diagnose & Design](#) will support this process.

FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

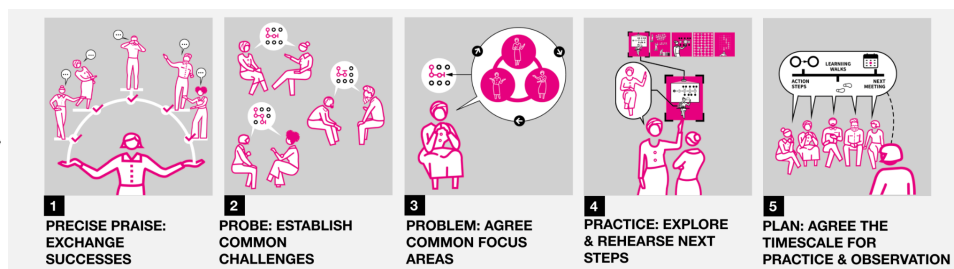
Dynamics of Dialogue



Coaching conversations should balance the importance of co-constructing feedback and actions with the need to be productive and action-focused. The dynamics are key, yet this is something that coaches often find difficult. Some conversations drift, others become too heavily coached. The best coaching dialogue sits in the middle - purposeful, responsive and grounded in teacher thinking.

5Ps Framework





This is Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's 5Ps approach, which works for team coaching as well as individuals. It's useful to have an overarching framework to keep dialogue purposeful. But it's important to remember that this framework isn't often the agenda for our conversations, more a mechanism to help us organise the teacher's thinking. The 5Ps are best used as a tool for co-constructing feedback - Build it, don't send it.

Co-construction - Build It, Don't Send It

Feedback should not be something that is sent or delivered as it is ineffective and disrespectful. Face-to-face coaching is the irreplaceable driver of schoolwide achievement - not computer tutors, AI coaches, or written feedback. AI doesn't have heart and it cannot lead, but it can give you more time to do so.

Co-constructed feedback is different and is a core starting point for our coaching system. It involves teachers in the sensemaking process, prompting them to think deeply about their classroom practice. It also makes meaningful action far more likely. Next steps should be co-created so that it is teacher-focused, specific and actionable.

Effective coaching is built through trust. Trust is built through transparency, reliability, unified understanding, support and time.. Teachers are more likely to engage when expectations are visible, roles are understood and boundaries are respected. They also need to see that the process is valued across the school.

When giving feedback keep your focus on the children - reframe observations and insights so that they are child-focused. Feedback on the performance of pupils is much more likely to be received as formative by the teachers.

E.g.,

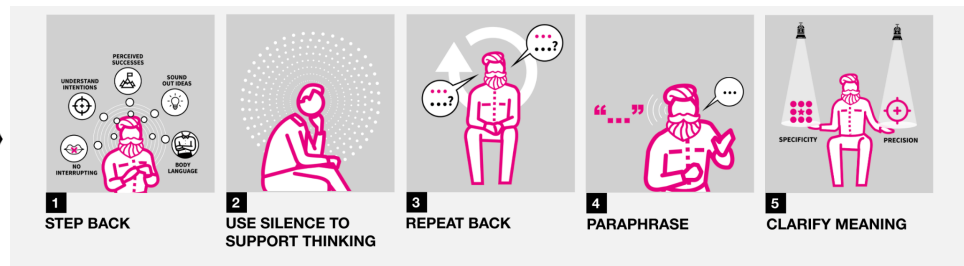
- ✗ "You didn't explain photosynthesis very well."
- ✓ "Pupils seemed to struggle with the explanation of photosynthesis."
- ✗ "You didn't give enough thinking time"
- ✓ "Pupils might have benefitted from a little more time to think."

Learning Exploration Form MASTER 2026-27

Coaching Questions

		
• Can you tell me a little bit about your class? • What have they been learning about, and how have they been getting on? • What kind of things have you been working on in your own practice? • What was on your mind when you designed this lesson/selected this technique? • What did you want pupils to know, understand or be able to do by the end? • How does this connect to your longer-term goals for the class or your own practice? • What drivers influenced your decision to use this approach at this time? • What other options did you consider, and why did you choose this one? • Did anything unexpected emerge that caused you to adjust your decision- making during the lesson? • How did your decision- drivers shape the actions you took during the lesson? • What steps did you take to intentionally create the conditions where all pupils could...? • How did you adapt your approach in response to what you noticed happening? • What are you seeing from your pupils that gives you confidence that this approach is starting to land well? • How do you think pupils got on here? Why do you think that? • To what extent do you think that all pupils took what they needed from this moment?	• Did you notice any pupils that were finding the work difficult? What did you see? • What did you notice about the pupils' attention levels here? • What stood out to you about the way pupils responded to your questions? What did you notice about their responses? • On a scale of 1-10, how successful were pupils in enacting your intentions? • What did you see from pupils that pleased you here? • What might you like to have seen that isn't quite there yet? • What might improve the quality of the pupils' work? What's missing? • How might you get more pupils involved? What might that look like? • How could that happen more/less often? • Why do you think pupils responded in that way? • What do you think caused them to struggle? • What might they have been missing? • What might be going on for the pupils here? • How do you think pupils would have responded if they'd had a little more thinking time? • What if you had checked for understanding in a different way - how might that have changed the outcome? • What might happen if that explanation was framed differently?	• What might make the biggest difference now? • Which of those changes do you think you need to tackle first? Why? • What might be the most sensible starting point here? • What could you do to make this happen? • Why might that work? • When wouldn't this technique work? Why not? • Have you seen or tried any strategies that worked for you in a similar situation? • What will you do next? • What does this look like tomorrow? • What's your plan for putting this into practice? • If we nailed this step, what difference would it make to your pupils? • What difference would it make to you? • What support, resources or adjustments do you need to make this happen? • Why might this not happen? What could get in the way? • What could help make this change easier to sustain over time?

Listening



As coaches, it's natural to want to offer solutions and ideas. But before we do that, we have to properly understand the challenges the teacher is facing. Skilful listening is the coach's superpower - it creates the space for real dialogue, prompts deeper thinking, brings clarity and builds trust. This isn't just about staying quiet; it's about being fully present, noticing what's said and what's not, and responding in ways that help the teacher organise, refine and extend their thinking.



Source: Adapted from Myles Downey

The BASIC Coaching continuum places non-directive (facilitative) coaching at one end and directive coaching at the other, with dialogical coaching in the centre. Imagine yourself tethered to this middle ground - you can flex in either direction, but always have the sense that you're being pulled back to the centre. Lean more towards non-directive when a teacher needs space to think, or more directive when they need a little bit of what you have to offer.

Coaches must dynamically adjust their coaching style along the directive-to-facilitative continuum based on the diagnosed strength of the teacher's mental models:

- **Strong Mental Models:** Move to facilitative (non-directive) coaching, letting the coach be "pulled along" by the teacher's own ideas and self-determined goals.
- **Partial Mental Models:** Adopt a dialogical "asking" style to guide their thinking, connecting, and deepening their schema.
- **Weak/Under-developed Mental Models:** Adopt a directive coaching style, sharing explicit expert information before asking guiding questions. Explicit directive feedback is an essential step in achieving expertise when mental models are under-developed; personal discovery alone is ineffective.

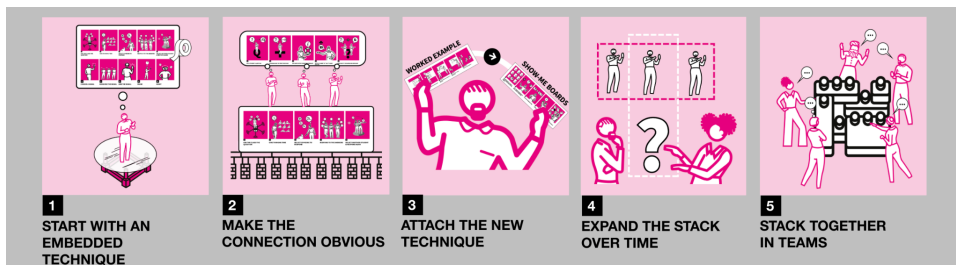
EMBED AND BUILD

Prompts, Cues and Checklists



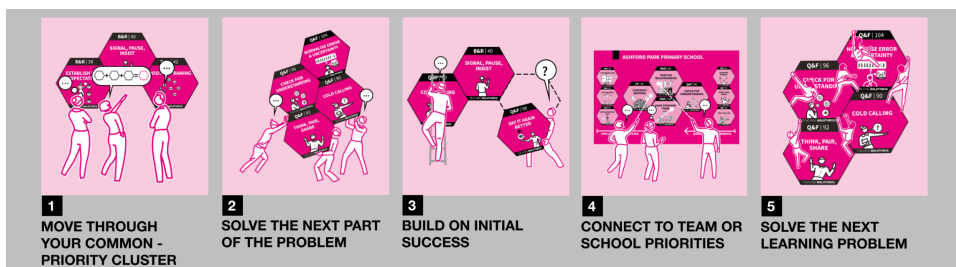
Research findings from the EEF highlight the importance of providing prompts and cues that nudge teachers to consistently apply new techniques. At the back end of a coaching cycle, these prompts help to consolidate new teaching habits and prevent them from drifting. With the demands of daily teaching, it's easy for new methods to lose momentum. The five steps outlined here provide practical strategies to keep these techniques front and centre.

Habit Stacking



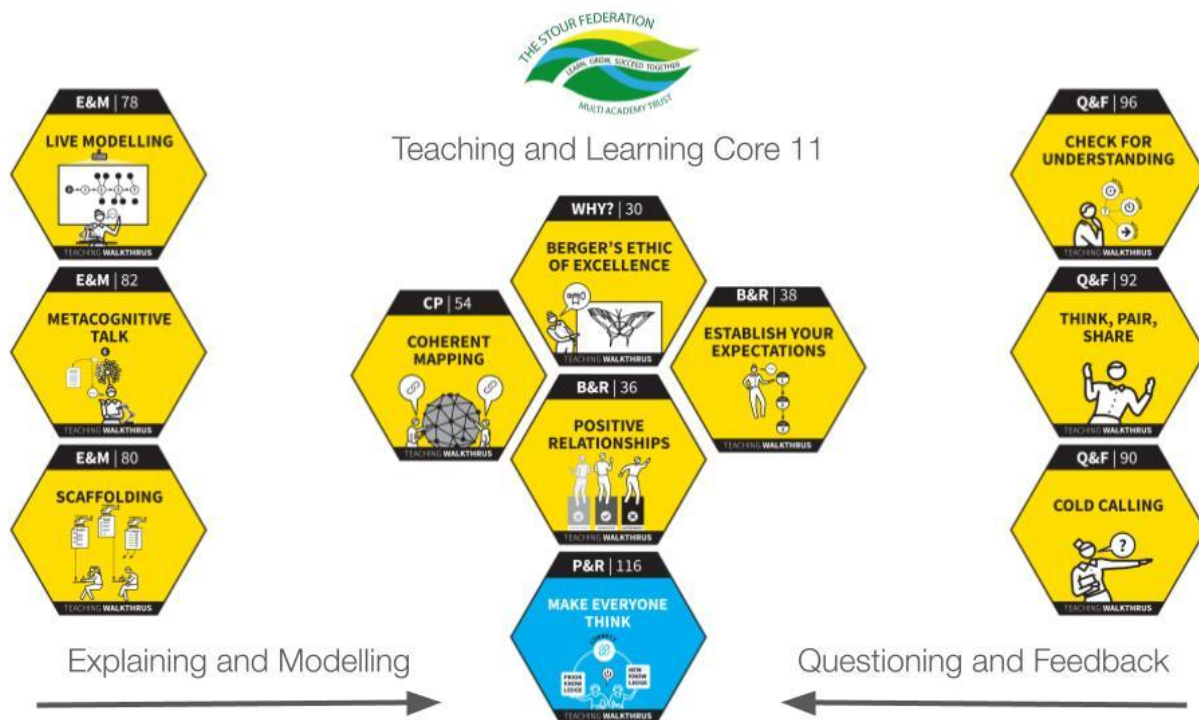
In *Atomic Habits*, James Clear recommends habit stacking to build strong routines by linking smaller actions together. In coaching, this means helping teachers blend techniques naturally rather than using them in isolation. Support teachers in using this approach to embed new habits and build their practice over time.

Clusters and Connected Moves



At the end of a coaching cycle, clusters help you guide teachers in identifying their next steps by grouping related techniques that work together. Just like dance steps or writing techniques form a routine, techniques are most effective when sequenced and combined, just like our

 WalkThrus Core 11



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TRUST Commitments Matrix

TRUST Principle	As your coach, I commit to...	As a teacher, I commit to...
Transparency	Gathering and analysing lesson evidence to focus on truth-seeking over opinion. I will actively listen, generate and test hypotheses about learning, and challenge your views while remaining open to revising my own.	Being open to the ideas and expertise of others, recognising that there are always areas of my practice I can improve. I welcome advice from my coach, but will also share my own ideas, and speak up when I feel unsure or uncomfortable.
Reliability	Being present, consistent, and available for you both in and out of the classroom. I will model best practice, rehearse with you until you feel confident, and provide support to help you make meaningful changes.	Making a sustained effort to implement agreed improvements in my classroom. I will proactively seek out support from my coach when needed and work collaboratively to troubleshoot any challenges that arise.
Unified Understanding	Supporting you in developing teaching expertise by sharing the best available educational research and WalkThrus techniques. I will maintain a productive balance of support and challenge, bringing my own ideas to the table.	Becoming an increasingly expert teacher. I recognise that teaching is a complex, challenging profession, and that I am reliant on active collaboration with colleagues to improve and flourish.
Support	Providing high-quality coaching, including effective modelling, context-specific rehearsal, and working with you to remove classroom barriers. I have high expectations for your growth, and will celebrate your progress.	Being an active and critical participant in interpreting the evidence from my classroom, and in carefully planning and rehearsing change. I will provide candid feedback on what is and isn't working for me.
Time	Building a highly effective relationship with you through consistent effort over time. I understand that establishing full openness and comfortable active rehearsal takes time and patience.	Building a highly effective, long-term relationship with my coach. I recognise that improving takes time and effort, and that coaching may at times feel frustrating, but I commit to sticking with the process.



Lesson Details			
Teacher:		Observer/s:	
Class:	Year:		Date & Time:
Support staff or teaching assistants:			
Lesson Context:			
Coaching Goal:		Floodlight/Spotlight:	

[illegible]

DISCUSSION SLIDERS	
1. Select Curriculum: Has the teacher selected the right ideas to teach?	- ← → +
2. Secure Attention: Has the teacher got students' attention?	- ← → +
3. Optimise Communication: Is the teacher presenting ideas in a way that is manageable to the pupils?	- ← → +
4. Drive Thought: Is the teacher pushing pupils to think hard about ideas?	- ← → +
5. Gather and Give Feedback: Is the teacher assessing pupil learning and responding appropriately?	- ← → +
6. Ensure Consolidation: Is the teacher supporting the pupils to consolidate their learning?	- ← → +

Precise Praise	Affirm specific elements of the technique that have landed successfully.
	
Probe	Surface the elements of the technique that are not quite there yet.
	
Problem & Action Step	What is the specific sticking point that we might work on next?
	
Practice	How will changes be practised and rehearsed?
	
Plan	What happens next, and when?
	